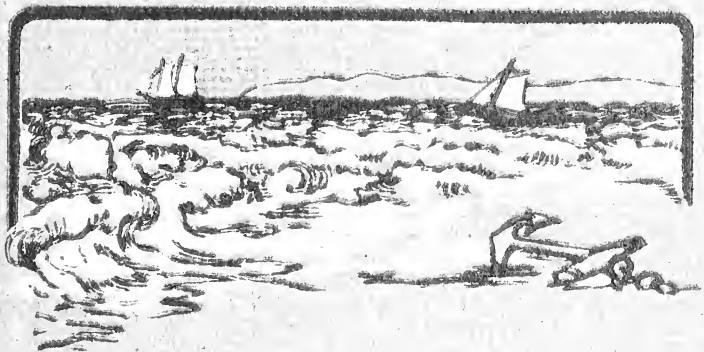


IDYLLS BESIDE THE STRAND

Franklin F. Phillips





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IDYLLS BESIDE THE STRAND

BY

FRANKLIN F. PHILLIPS
AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE ISLES," ETC.



BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
| 1912

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W 1

TO
THE NAMESAKE OF MY REVERED ANCESTOR
NANCY PAGE PRESCOTT
MY GRANDDAUGHTER
NANCY PAGE KIMBALL
THIS FRAGILE FLOWER OF MY
MUSE IS DEDICATED



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PART I

SEA AND STRAND



PRELUDE

MAY

WOVEN is sun-lit green
In sweet designs frost-saddened hues among:
Through many a glade is seen
The garland-grace that tender hands have
flung:
The forest kings review
A joyous retinue.

A boundless rhapsody
Unto the brooks and birds belongs:
They in their ecstasy
Toy in the shallows, fill the woods with songs:
Young leaves the measures keep,
And bells wake on the steep.

A happy thought to stroll
With youth's light sandals borrowed for my
feet,
The sparrow's tufted knoll
And cuckoo's hazel copse in joy to greet:
Haunts of a nested love,
Arched by the blue above.

Now is, glad Hope, thy way
Embosomed in the fondness of the spring,
Cheered for the livelong day,
Till eve's dull eyes behold night's spreading
wing,
When flowers enfold the dew,
To wait the morrow new.

A HOUSE BY THE SEA

LET me live in a house by the side of the sea,
Where the ships of the world go by,
Where their sails appear and disappear
On the line of sea and sky:
Where the ocean hound looms above the surge
With a proud, defiant mien,
And the tireless beat of her vulcan heart
In her crater smoke is seen.
There the rose blooms sweet at the open door,
That looks on the cliff and strand,
The gray sea wall, the thus-far bound,
That was set by an unseen hand.
There the sailor went out on his voyage world
round,
But returned not again for aye;
On a coral bier in a crystal crypt
He's sleeping the years away.
There is seen at times in swelling throng
A convention of the waves;
At times a mirrored sea of glass,
That sunken ledges laves.
Great songs are sung there in the night,
In diapason tone,
The victor's pean and the dirge,
Echoed from zone to zone.

The light of sun and moon and stars
 Makes ever changing mood,
The eve's dull gray, the morn's wine red,
 When inky storm clouds brood.

I hate the black and bitter sea,
 I love the smiling tide,
I kneel and kiss the monarch's hand
 That bears a rule so wide.
I have read his skilled diplomacy,
 That sways the world afar;
I have seen the Titan battle gage
 Of the elements at war,
When the freedom-loving ocean fought
 The winter's grim advance,
And, in the fury of assault,
 Battered his helm and lance.

On the shores are scattered the dregs and dross
 Of the alchemists' surmise,
And over them—peerless monuments—
 Marconi's towers rise.
For the universal panacea
 Of ills still hides away,
And gold, from the baser metals made,
 Awaits a fairer day.
The sea, the bitter, briny sea
 Holds drugs and metals rare;
But science raises her shining lance,
 And pierces the night and air:

She hurls against the sleet-clad winds
Her million candle light,
And laughs the mariner to sleep,
Hammocked in blackest night:
She sings her messages of cheer
In pulsing ether lays;
She wings a voice across the seas,
The miracle of days.
She whispers glorious prophecy
Of triumphs at the gate,
That sages and sears have so long
Bade trembling hopes await.
Soon shall be laid the good ship's keel,
That stranded will not break,
That, foundering in the wildest floods,
Home will her life-freight take.
Soon shall the grim, ice-bearded face
That looks upon the pole,
Happily smile, because the while
Air-ships that way will stroll.

Let me live in a house by the shore of the sea,
For a race of men stood here,
Too near to the dawn of creation's morn,
To know a shade of fear;
Too near to the great lives in the sea
And the earth and radiant air—
Too near to that from which they sprung,
To have a thought of care.

In ancient mounds it doth appear,
 They sometimes ate their kind,
Till they learned one day a better way
 Through some frenzy of the mind.
When first upon the azure sea
 A shallop came to view,
Unto their wondering thought it sailed
 Out of the heaven's blue.

The Norse man came through the northern sea,
 And the north wind blew him hard,
It blew him alack in the foamy track
 Of the Celtic monk and bard:
For the monk had brought the holy cross,
 The bard had sung of peace,
And in such gracious ministries
 The heart found sweet release.
But the Viking's hands were stained with blood,
 And fire was in his brain;
He carved his rage upon the rocks,
 He mocked the wind and rain.
From the skulls of his foes he drank their
 blood,
 That his own blood came to be;
And flowing into and out of his heart,
 It tamed his progeny:
* Till like the sun and foam-sprung race,
 The monk and the cross he bore,
* Red Men, as set forth in one of their myths.

Like the bard that tuned his skin-strung harp
And sung around the shore,
He better loved the soil and bay
Than he loved the berg and wind;
He hailed the dawn of a fairer day,
And wished not so hard he'd sinned.

Let me live by the sea, where a league away
No nation can claim the wave:
'Tis the world's highway, and its battlefield,
Its treasure-vault and grave.
One night when no stars in heaven were seen
For the haze that swept the sky,
Old Boreas, the Northwind, sang to me,
With a tear froze in his eye.
And the sad night's tears froze as they fell,
But the sea drank up the sleet;
And the song he sung I have written down,
And this is it complete:

SONG OF THE NORTHWIND

A hardy and brusque Titan, born
Of the sweet rosy goddess of morn,
From my wild rock-ribbed cavern I go,
To wantonly buffet the snow:

But I sigh and sob and sough
On the moss and fir-clad bluff,
O'erlooking the gray, salt sea,
I have vexed uproariously.

My father, stern Astreaus, frowns,
When he ponders what kingdoms and crowns
Could be bought with the wealth I have strown
In the ocean depths soundless and lone.

Then I sigh and sob and sough
On the moss and fir-clad bluff;
For the stubborn, gray, salt main
Will not give it back again.

My brothers—the fairest, I ween,
Have Auster and Zephyr e'er been—
And my sisters, loved stars in the sky,
Oft reproach me with look and with sigh;
And I sigh and sob and sough
On the moss and fir-clad bluff;
For down the gray, salt strand
There's a blanched corse on the sand.

The mariner knows my shrill voice,
Now cheering the way of his choice,
Now calling the storms on his path,
Provoking his fear and his wrath:

But I sigh and sob and sough
On the moss and fir-clad bluff;
O'erlooking the gray, salt waves,
That fashion my victims' graves.

Disdaining all guile and intrigue,
But regardless of treaty and league,
Many good ships and stores I've destroyed,
As with war's fitful fortunes I've toyed.

Still I sigh and sob and sough
On the moss and fir-clad bluff;
For round the gray, salt deep
The slave and exile weep.

Though far from my dim mountain home
On most mischievous missions I roam,
From the blest Hyperborean lands
I withhold my rough, riotous hands:

And I sigh and sob and sough
On the moss and fir-clad bluff;
And gaze o'er the gray, salt way,
On their long and gladsome day.

A LESSON FROM THE SEA

PROUD main, what heart pulsations thine must
be,

To send into each far extremity
Such vital currents! Thy hoar face, forsooth,
Impugns nor Atlas strength, nor fadeless
youth.

Expectant thou dost never wait
At Oriental or Hesperian gate
Thy loud knock's answer; entering thou dost
gain

New acquisitions for thy vast domain.

Last night I went beyond the land-locked bay,
To do thee homage, own thy rightful sway.
Received my vows the votaries of the seas,
The azure fields were thronged with witnesses.
I heard thy edicts thundered on the strand,
Great peans sung, such as round Indian land,
The icy poles, Pacific islands lone,
Are sung and wafted on from zone to zone.
Over the billowy way and gusty height
Came the clear voicings of the erudite;
Arts, mathematics, philosophic seat
Appealed from alga-shade, coral retreat,
Bidding me bow unto the docile grace
That ever makes of mine a nobler race.

THE GRANITE ISLES

GROUPED on the heaving bosom of the tide,
Where artless lays the fluvial waters sing,
To lull the weary surf that inlets hide,

And o'er the voiceful flood the mountains fling
The sky's dark bodes, or tokens of its smiles,
Appear, in modest guise, the granite isles.

Low evergreens, that sterile lands deplore—
Meet growth from soil that winter's rage
infests—

Mantle the silex of the drifty shore,
Where strand in pebbly shoals the sinking
crests

Of billows tired of the sculptor's art
On stone whose rugged form is slow to part.

The cliffs, grim warriors mailed in iron-gray,
Resist the furious onsets of the sea;
Clear blazoned on their shields, that glance
the spray,

Are seen the types of time's immensity.
Such might in earth's primordial ranks arose,
And valor such the glacial fields ne'er froze.

No man hath valid title to a rood
Of this dull glebe, lingering 'twixt storm and
main,

On which, when azure gates ope o'er the flood,

The sun and stars their showers of beauty
rain:
Long hath Atlantis, in his watery grave,
Held it in mortmain 'gainst the encroaching
wave.

The dweller in the clime where sun and air
Make need of bowery nooks and breezy calls,
The while Æolian harps, attuned most rare,
The languid winds light trill, or silence
thralls,
Finds on these isles, in sound of ocean's song,
The blood to leap anew in currents strong.

PONCE DE LEON

HIDE Porto Rico in the tropic waves
And dissipate embittered memories
Of dispossession of an arduous rule,
Stint of my worth tried in Ovando's cause,
And with our daring Pilot on the seas,
When faith's full buds had opened half to sight,
And his renewed quest would certify
Whether these wilds are but the outer gates
To India's opulence, the sounding shores
Of waters flowing from bright Eden's plains,
Or providential pontoons hither thrown,
To bridge the "sea of darkness" and the gulf
Of mutinous despair, so he might prove
That paradox unto our mother faith,
A western way to reach the ancient east.

Before us lie the late-found Sporades
On Neptune's shallow areas, trident-plowed,
Where from his briny fist the seeds were flung
And scattered by autumnal hurricanes,
To sprout in gentle winters, and to grow
In summers long. Come, comrades, let's ex-
plore
These waifs from Paradise, perhaps to find
Atlantis risen from his watery bier,
With head exalted in Elysian skies.

As ripples now imagination's calm
With such conceit, and reflux wakes a wave
Of the incertitude beyond life's bound,
I make to you confession of a thought
That in my cup, for years so full and sweet,
Has come to be the dregs, the bitterness
Of which morn's nimble fingers stir, and eve
With hasty palm presses unto my lips.
Ponce is growing old: Whitens this brow:
The fires that kindled bright on Leon's hills
Against the proud Cantabrians' northern cold,
And lent their warmth unto the south plateau,
Sink to dull embers in this wasting frame.
To nature's course in our historic night
I would have yielded; but dawn streaks the
 shade,
Prophetic of a day that I must see
And gain therein a full and fitting meed.
Then search, and from each bosom-jeweled
 hill
And dale take ye the gold: enough of that
Have I: but where gem-radiant beauty gleams
From bubbling founts, wet your tentative lips,
Drink light, drink deep, drink eager, oft, and
 press
The dripping garlands to your brows, telling
To me, in the same quest, if strength's begotten.
These simple natives—fools, they had not
 marked

The spot—tradition have of one whose flesh
Was withered, and whose frame was lowly bent
Beneath the arching sunset of his day,
But who, finding by chance a magic pool,
The fine complexities of which so long
Have baffled all the skill of alchemy,
For earth is jealous of her rarest arts,
Drank, and in rapture stood again in youth,
And saw anew his dusky progeny.
So, if not sooner found, that boon shall claim
My search till this worn heart no longer can
Shake off the heavy hand of time; and you
Who share the boon, will some day hold a cup
Of it against the barter of a world.

Your zeal for me, my friends, has overrun
Th' applauding isles and reached these ever-
glades,
That whisper continental prophecies:
But the bright days with hurried strides move
on,
Urged by the lashes of invidious age,
The voicings of each new-found strand to me
Sound not unlike pathetic threnodies,
While desperation goads my struggling want
The lotion and potation yet to find
Which so involve chaotic elements,
As in our human mould to balk the bane
Of dissolution. Nature's sons have been

Unto our project mainly tractable,
But yonder thicket glooms with fell designs,
And—Holy Saviour, fate has set its seal
Upon my breast, and writ its name in blood!
Draw out the arrow, but probe not the wound;
'Twill give me needless pain: the gash, alas,
Too surely rankles with a poison barb.
Grim Death, around me now thy eloquence
Fast weaves its wordless spell; athwart my
sight
Thy justice stands with fine-poised balance
beam;
In thy might's presence all my cherished
thought
Of healing waters is but mockery.
With its renunciation—lo, a calm,
My dim view clarifies: proud Leon's hills
In joy again I see, and far beyond,
O'er the gray crests of ancient Ephraim,
Behold a vision that our sacred shrines,
Through their fair symbols, ne'er to me dis-
closed,
E'en where on Shechem's slope, by Jacob's
well,
Stood in meek majesty the Nazarene,
And through Samaria's gates spake to the
world
Of living waters. I have found the fount,
To drink in this last moment, and to press

The untried strand with but a stripling's feet.
Full long ago I should have drank and slaked
The fever-thirst of my delusive dreams;
So could I enter now the boundless way
In the full stature of God-imaged man.

NEWFOUNDLAND

FIRST of the Atlantic isles to bow
In true allegiance unto Britain's sway:
First I beheld thy towering headland's brow
Above the sleet of Cabot's surge and spray,
Stern mountain wall that shelters far retreats,
Where fishers furl the brown sails of their fleets.
What genial phase and gentle mood
Could I bethought October's morn would bring,
With Phœbus low across the swinging flood,
Far southward destined on gray stretching
 wing,
While icy arms from pale of Arctic night
Reached out and held thee from his fleeting
 light?
Kind nature sought to clothe thy shore
With both deciduous and perennial green;
But frightened by the ocean's tragic roar,
Or pierced by barbs of boreal arrows keen,
She fled to dales of inland deep and still,
And lavished there the graces of her will.
The Basques the Britons did not love,
From Basques and Britons the Boethics fled;
A joy to me, these days of twilight prove,
The Britons have a shelter for my head.
Homes have they reared, made fire-sides on the
 strand;
True conquerors such in every clime and land!

UNCONQUERED

WITH strength of triple brass was bound,
E'en so the ancient classic said,
The breast of him who first was found
To brave the sea's white-crested head.

Their way but sunlit and pole-starred,
And neither when the tempests rose,
The Norseman and Druidic bard
Defied the arctic bergs and floes.

A thousand years their little barks
Of triple bull-hide, ribbed with oak,
Dashed over seas of chartless marks,
But on ice horrors never broke.

Both impact and resistance tried,
Hulls tanned, or salted in the main,
With raging winds and waves they vied,
They mocked the pelting hail and rain.

Displacement, buoyancy well told,
What cared they for the threatening sky,
The hollow of the water-wold,
The crest, though rising mountains high?

To latest time, proud Genoa,
Is sung thy daring Pilot's praise,
Who steered his caravel afar,
To find the east through western ways,

Bridging with faith dark floods of fear,
And gulfs of mutinous despair,
Finding perchance a hemisphere
In virgin beauty hidden there.

And aye for daring constant bides
The praise unto the Cabots sung,
Who from the ice-gorged Laurentides
The tribute of our northland wrung.

Bridged are the seas, beacons the strands
With glare of incandescent light:
Signals are sent by viewless hands,
Warnings of every bane to blight.

Ships, ribbed and planked with bolted steel,
Now span the sea's successive waves,
With Vulcan heart, with rushing keel
Still hollowing treasure vaults and graves.

What genius of a rushing world
Can build a ship, that avarice,
With purple to the breeze unfurled,
May safely sail the fathomless?

What captain of our life marines
Can trumpet from a true command
The word, when the ice-spectre sheens,
That brings each man unto his stand,

To do, to die, as did, indeed,
Columbia's soldier in the night,
When the Titanic's direful need
Brought every character to light,

The high, the lowly, strong and weak?
He, acting for himself alone,
Too far to hear his Chieftain speak,
Well met his country's judgment throne.

Sail on, Oh, Ship of State, sail on,
Sail valiantly, sail guardedly;
And, whether in the dark or dawn,
Beware of perils of the sea.

RESPITE

WHEN a summer's fair hand beckoned, from a
classic seat and tome
I came to a strand of the ocean, drifty with
moss and foam;
And heard the waves' sage whispers, and
shared in their mirth-prompted smiles,
Where the river and sea chased each other
among the applauding isles.

Youth of a noble impulse, native of rigor's
clime,
Bell of a lofty import, marking the student's
time:
The air once breathed by sages, that did the
gods regale
Whose home was white Olympus, whose haunt
was Tempe vale,
Could not inspire your mission more grandly
than the breeze
That wafts your mountain pine-balm and odor
of the seas;
Nor tell in whispers plainer the beauty and the
worth
That gracious knowledge giveth the homes and
marts of earth;
The way that aspiration impels Fame's feet
to go
Unto her splendent temple and stars of fade-
less glow.

To me, on whose young spirit your joys and
cares once fell,
Like the sunshine and the shadows, that flecked
the bay and dell,
The past kaleidoscopic, in multi-form and hue,
Gives back the joys and pleasures, blending the
old with new:
But the cares and pains are likened to vesture
faded and old,
That in oblivion's chamber is given to moth
and mold.

May lore's unfailing fountain life's noontime
thirst assuage,
Her sunlight linger fondly on the whitening
hills of age,
And her star rays descending in the quiet even-
tide,
Come as the benedictions of those who early
died,
Died e'en as flowers the sweetest, and fairest
to the sight,
Soon drop their fragile petals, and vanish from
the light.
Now on the breath of greetings farewells re-
luctant fall,
And respite's tent is folded at duty's stirring
call.

IMPRESS

'Twixt day and night we speed away,
Fast fade the headlands o'er the sea;
The tranquil deep and shadowed sky
Blend in a zone of mystery.

Of this wide calm the magic spell
And overpowering sense I feel,
But little reckon of the storm
That rages round the good ship's wheel,

Till in its throes unto my sight
A baffled birdling doth appear,
Soon to be laid, a little corse,
To rest upon so great a bier.

This little life, parting, recalls
A youthful dream, an early choice;
O'er storm and calm and mystery
Is heard the whisper of a voice:

"Duty, in bark however frail,
Its sail will set for every breeze,
And grandly into port will come,
Or sail with God the surging seas."

PART II
VIA SACRA



THE FORERUNNER

HAIL, leathern-girdled,
Thou seer with front of bronze and heart of
oak:
All who their age outrun, the truth to greet,
With thee must bow to condemnation's stroke,
Dealt in the darkness of wrong's old retreat.

THE SEAMLESS VESTURE

UNTO the bards and seers of ages gone,
All who have sung in thrilling note divine
The All-abounding, and man's destiny,
Is brought the tribute of deep-welling joy:
All who have seen and spoken better things
Than to their ages of trite mould had come,
Hail, and to each a lasting meed of praise;
To him whose lofty text the Orient taught,
And him, the Himalayas' perfect sage,
The Indus' son, with face unto the sky,
The Lawgiver from Sinai's cloud and flame,
Him who, with ear deaf to the Delphic voice,
Heard through death's night a morning call
 serene,
And the enshrined at Mecca in the plain,
Time's latest melodies, eternal song.

Thou Genesis, chant of primordial morn,
Apocalypse, unfolding tragedy
Of time unto the day that needs no sun,
For naught but God lights the perfected soul,
And Paradise lost, and regained, moving
In vast procession militant arrayed,
Worthy all be unto celestial choirs.
Prophets of days that break more cloudless still
Than eyes inured to storms painlessly view,
Whether about the shades of ancient night,

Or mediæval watch, or this late hour:
Priests who have offered blameless sacrifice
Upon the altars of a human need:
Kings who have ruled not by their lineage,
But by the power divine proclaimed and
crowned;
Be yours the beauty of a hallowed lay.

Beside a protozoan stood a man,
And both were perfect in a plan divine,
Although a million ages intervened
Since first to last the Architect unseen
Proclaimed in each his satisfaction wrought.
The myriad undertakings and defaults,
That fill in daze of wonderment the mind,
Say not unworthy of so high an aim,
To make an universe companion to Himself.
The struggle of blind instinct from the worm
Unto the lion, crouching in his lair,
To rear a self, that set the starlit pace
Through rugged heights unto unselfish day:
The gnawing pain, the racking torture borne,
The stain and cruel blotch, count not amiss.
Heights have no lasting worth without the
climb,
And many a fall but goads the purpose on
To that sure footing in the wasteless realm.

Full long the Flowery Kingdom's ancient hope
Was for perfection in an earth-born soul,

For the ideal man, whose mind and heart
All parentage by sex purely contained,
The holy one, in whom sweetly inhered
Reality of spirit without days.
The Indian Yogi in his cult enjoined
The high attainment of the perfect sage:
But Persian magi hailed the star divine,
That led them to the child of manger birth:
For heaven's high will into the cosmic warp
Enjoins the weaving of humility:
And love and purity and duty twine
Threads tinted warm with sanguine sacrifice:
And these must never fail, lest fail at last
The aspiration of the universe.
Sing then, O Muse, in thy divinest key,
Earth's tragic mishap foiled in Heaven's pure
law;
Sing in thy thrilling notes of rhapsody.

One dark and bitter day when hate was rife,
And a discordant sect unto its own was lost,
While a hard civic world conjured withal,
They led unto a malefactor's cross
Him who but benefaction nothing knew.
In meekness drank he then the purple cup,
Attesting thus an altruistic soul;
Soul that a mother gives unto her child,
Gave he, with anguish stung, to all mankind.
The executioners o'er much inured,
Noting 'twixt guilt and grace no chasm wide,

Failed the high import even to respect,
But 'mongst them then his raiment eager doled;
And for his seamless vesture cast they lots.
Nature in toil had spent a million years
On warp and woof, weaving thus seamlessly:
But when her shuttle had last sped its beam,
They travestied the fabric wantonly.

What is the meed for such a life so given?
And for the martyr hosts whose banners white,
By him entrained, wave so submissively
Above their ranks fallen in causes won?
It is the meed that prompts e'en bitter tongues
To sing in peans sweet of truth's new day,
Of justice, poised more beauteously,
Of peace, whose joyous wings stretch shadow-
less,
Of purity, as is the starlight pure:
A priceless meed, that in both warp and woof
Shall clothe in faultlessness a tattered world.

Of those who ply with zeal life's textile art,
Plain though they weave, or on a jackard loom,
The pattern shown in vision on the mount
Can never fail to win the docile mind,
To weave the vesture in its seamlessness.

Some with a nimble grace will weave,
Some slow the shuttle and the beam impel;
Full many sundered threads must knotted be;
But though the ages still on patience wait,
Perfection's holy kiss awaiteth all.

For that my lowly song more loudly swells,
And trills immeasurable in ardent note,
And hails the heavenly orbs, that listen deft
Unto the vibrant choristry of worlds.

OUT OF THE DEEP

PRIDE hath its falls ; ambition, precipices :
Let not my heart go down
In world abysses.

THE LIFE IMMORTAL

IN chosen converse one with me once sate:
Clear voiced he spake of the transcendent state
Above the zones, beyond the passing years,
Where life all freedom hath among the spheres.
"For me," he said, "it hath some great sur-
prise,
Some nameless beauty for new-sighted eyes,
But simple as the starlight and the dew:
Such is the power that maketh all things new."

REPOSE

SERENE the mountain sank into his slumber,
When the bright harvest-laden day was done.
Soft was his couch, the fen: his robe of sun
And sea-blent hues, wondrous in shade and
 number,
Could not, forsooth, his giant frame encumber.
Then, as the chemic dew in stealth begun
To fall, night palled the robe with wrappings
 dun,
And veiled with mist the sleeper's visage sombre.
The winds within their caverns went to sleep:
Weird voicings of the waves to silence fell:
Into a faultless mirror sank the deep,
To image all when morn should break the spell.
Thus go earth's great through the celestial
 portal,
And radiant souls, unto the realm immortal.



PART III
THE HERMIT'S TALES



PROLOGUE

WHERE the white man's habitation
First beside "the Georges" rose,
And a scenic beauty graces
Summer green or winter snows:
Where the quiet river, wending
Out into Saint George's flood,
Seems a spright of wondrous beauty
In wild meadows of the wood;
There a hermit early ventured
To the cheerful open door,
But he named no cause of leaving
Kindred, home, and goodly store,
Only telling that he journeyed
To a wilderness retreat,
Where his heart, in slow repining,
In God's time might cease to beat.
He it was who cut the opening
Near the hilltop in the swale:
Hence the name of Bogue is given
To the clearing and the Dale.
With the fur of fox and otter,
Trapped and hunted, he was clad:
He was withered, he was pallid,
Deep his eyes, his visage sad:
All his mien and look dejected
Told his heart-appalling plight,
Woes of many years reflected,
Not the sorrows of a night.

Palsied hand and hickory staff,
All he had to lean upon,
Warded winters of neglect,
Whirlwinds of oblivion.

Oft as at the genial fireside
He was welcome to a seat,
Indian legend and tradition
There he tarried to repeat:
And whatever else he mentioned,
Memory urging ardently,
He bespoke of unspoiled red men
Peace and hospitality.
That was shown of the Nippissings,
Iroquois and Montagnais,
The Abenagues and Boethics,
Chippewas and Ojibways.
Never had he come among them
Faint and cold from tempest ire,
But the best they had they welcomed
To him—raiment, food and fire:
And to them a sacred symbol
Was the pipe of peace when given,
A sure pledge to the Great Spirit
Of good-will, witnessed in heaven.
If perchance within the wigwam
Something lured the stranger's gaze,
Straightway it was his possession,
Such were their accustomed ways.

Of the picturesque old recluse
Why then palter, narrating?
Let us introduce his subjects,
Bring him harp, and let him sing.

THE BOETHICS

FLEEING Arcadia's ruined peace,
And Louisburg with fallen gate,
A bark, hard battered by the seas,
Bore me o'er Cabot's stormy strait;
And in the calm of Baie des Isles
I sought Ste. Mary's holy fane,
Hoping within her cloister walls
To find my loved and lost again.

And never be the night forgot,
When autumn gales the mountains tore,
And leaf and branch and drifts of hail
Were hurled upon the Humber's shore.
The little hospice, built of stone
And roofed with spruce on rafter-oak,
Quivered at times when tempest blasts
In fury o'er the hamlet broke.

About the stone hearth, where the fire
Burned with the anger of the wind,
Were seated sisters, priests and monks,
Devoted to all who had sinned,
Or known a sorrow of the mind,
And in their midst sat Mary March,
And she was old and she was blind:
A fair young Indian in the days
When the Boethics held the Isle,
Now bowed beneath a hundred years,

With face that had forgot to smile;
As brown and withered as the leaves
That fluttered round Ste. Mary's tower,
And mingled with the frozen sleet,
That thickened to the midnight hour.
Her brow was like the mountain's brow,
On which the centuries had stormed;
Her hands were thin, like eagle's claws
Her fingers that the fire warmed.

And when I asked if not perchance
Some wigwam in the forest wild,
Guarded by sleepless vigilance,
Might keep for me my wife and child,
The holy father crossed himself,
Turned unto Mary March and said:
"Tell to the stranger sore in grief
How your Boethic kindred fled."

Her voice rose strident as the wind;
Her words fell rattling as the hail,
That crashed upon the arching roof,
Swept by the fury of the gale.
"Unnumbered moons had waxed and waned
Since first my sires in bark canoes
Began to fish the friths and bays
That lave the arctic bergs and floes,
And plant their meager plats of maze
Among the rocks 'neath sheltering hills,
Where scanty summer's slanting sun

Makes growth or blight, as Heaven wills;
But where the Spirit great and good
With mete of compensation came
And filled the seas and streams with fish,
The woods with furred and feathered game,
Before a pale face from beyond
The sea, that hissed remonstrance stern,
Here built a roof hewn with an axe,
And made a chimney hearth-fire burn.

My fathers' brows gloomed at the sight
Of sails with oak and hemlock dyed,
And shores, on rock and rack far strown
With fish their seamen caught and dried;
Then turned their faces to the woods,
And sought unbroken peace within,
Assured that He who rules the world,
Would sanguine strife impute as sin.

Their valor then the Saxons ruled
As cowardice, and pressing far
Into the forest depths, they found
And took beneath a luckless star
A maid, that in a wigwam slept,
And from her kindred to St. Johns
They led her, to be taught the tongue
Native unto their mothers' sons:
That she might be interpreter
For them unto her kindred chiefs,
That thus perchance might be revealed

Accordant motives and beliefs,
Embracing which, the races twain
Might live in harmony as one,
Ranging the woods, exploiting seas,
Spurning the arrow and the gun,
Save that their use in taking game
For food and vesture both should ply,
Where plenty filled the boundless haunts
Of river, wood, and crag-cleft sky.

When first my parents knew my loss,
What lamentation woke the wild,
And tragedy of grief disclosed
The heart of nature's dusky child,
I have not heard, but well believe;
For, gauging it by woes mine own,
When the strange footfall in the woods
Beat out a direful monotone,
And I was borne to pale face haunts,
Faces and forms I fain would shun,
It rose like tempests lightning-plumed,
That with black pinions veil the sun;
It smote as smites the bitter sea
Gray rocks, that fringe far Notre Dame,
When rage has forced the rampant winds
To beat the surf white with alarm.

Young fawns from copses cast shy looks
Of pity that I must depart;
The ptarmigan, white plumed and brown,
From nested young was seen to start,

And cleave the air in wild affright,
Adding a gloom unto my fears,
That from dun clouds of alien night
Have rained their sorrow through the years.
For what to me was kindness' gift
And comely manners in a race,
That from my brown-cheeked kindred turned
The steps I never can retrace?
They gave me vesture, food and bed,
But in my dreams the silent stars
Whispered a language they knew not,
To teach futility of wars.

Two years the accents of their tongue
Fell on my ears, till I could tell
Their wishes to Boethic hearts,
In whose domain they thought to dwell.
But when they led me forth to meet
Those whose resentment they'd appease,
Gone were Boethics, not a trace
Haunted the woods, or flecked the seas.
After long years of solitude
I left the harbor of St. John,
And gladly took a Christian's vows
At Saint Pierre and Miquelon."

Her voice fell with the dying moans
Of tempests in their fury spent;
Her brown face took an ashy hue,
That to the midnight umbrage lent.

“Her grief as poignant e’en as mine,
Old though she was, and I was young,
No holy mission could assuage:
Thus is my song of sorrow sung.”

The Hermit rose and said goodnight,
The pioneers kind wished him cheer:
The moon had set, the stars were dim;
Haply his lonely lodge was near.

THE MONTAGNAIS

IN the snows of winter falling
Came the Hermit to the door
Of the pioneers' log house,
At their fireside sang once more.

Hied I to the headstrong waters
Of the cliff-walled Saguenay,
Listened to the spruces' idyls
Sung along the desperate way
From the lake, St. John, and river,
St. Maurice, haunts of the wolf,
Bear and otter, and the wild fowls
Migrant from the distant gulf.
Tragedy of every semblance
There appeared on shores and falls;
Grandeur of the wildernesses
Loftiest in river walls;
Purling depths no plummet reaches
In the water caves beneath;
And the bay of Ha Ha drawing
All the summer at a breath;
For white winter reigns supernal
On the polar reaches drear.
Sheltered by the spruce and pine trees,
Aborigines appear.

Underneath the cliff o'erhanging
And the boughs of fir and pine,
Little minded they the wigwam,
At the summer's swift decline;
But when first white snows of winter
Hailed the white full moon o'erhead
In the gray-walled plain they gathered,
And weird incantations said.
They were nature's sons, peace-loving,
And th' Algonquin's sanguine rage
Never found their hearts responsive
To the tribal battle gauge.

They were trappers; they were hunters;
And they fished the lake and stream;
Twanged the bow and flashed the arrow,
But the tomahawk's dread gleam
In their hands ne'er brained an infant
On a trembling mother's breast;
Stood their dusky braves for honor;
Prayed their prophet for their rest
In the happy grounds of hunting
Never seen on mortal strand;
But his prayer was never wanting
Of stern justice's sure command.

Central sat the aged Sachem,
With his forehead brown and bare,
Bony limbs clad in skin vesture,
Eagle-feathered, thin gray hair;

But his eye was like the starlight,
And his face, calm as the moon;
Silver-voiced, his words came mellow
As the wind in summer noon.
He had seen the leaf and hoar-frost
Come and go for ninety years;
Brown and pale-face both he counted
As his brothers and his peers
In the right to conquer nature,
Winning vesture, food and fire,
When the winter crossed the wildwood,
And the storm beat in its ire.

Next sat Prophet Kaonabo,
Who was hoary, bent with years,
Who had known the wilds of nature,
Known them ever without fears;
Known the habits of the panther,
Catamount and wolverine,
Loved the beaver and the otter
Of the tangled wood ravine;
Heard with ravished ear the song-thrush,
Seen the lark mount up on high,
Known the water-fowl's far-voiced note,
When the winter left the sky—
Bird, whose astronomic instinct
Made no error, as it flew
In its thousand mile migration
From old summer unto new.

He'd traced the wild bee, culling honey
From the wild bloom in the glade,
Noting all the lines and angles
That unerringly it made
From its vineyard to its storehouse
In the trunk of hollow tree,
Seen how every drone was slaughtered
At the queen bee's high decree;
Watched with interest the mould-hill,
Where the ants at break of day
Drew their young to air and sunlight—
Sanitarians in their way.

So he prayed for peace and plenty,
With extended, trembling hands,
That the trappers and the hunters,
From the reaches and the lands
Stretching from Laurentian mountains
To the ice of Hudson Bay,
Might return with furs and fawn-flesh,
Cured in Indian summer day;
Thus to bless the hoary winter
With the comfort and the cheer,
That the aged and the helpless
Needed in the time of drear.

On the moon's full sea of glory,
Flooding on the bars of snow,
Sailed the phantoms of his vision,
Through the wampum smoke wreathed slow—

Sailed unto the seat of power,
Sailed up to the throne of stars,
Sailed unto the great peace-Giver,
Teaching hatred but of wars.

Then a hundred maidens, kneeling
In red fox-skins on white snow,
Raised brown hands in ways appealing
For a lay some brave might know.
Then a youth in tawny wolfskin,
With dark stripes upon his face,
Sang how first that decoration
Marked the features of his race.

Long and cold had been a winter;
Hunger pressed a tribe most sore,
And a brave, most lithe among them,
Sought a deer round glade and shore;
But a raging mountain lion,
Desperate too for flesh and blood,
Scented there his wandering footsteps
In the leaves along the wood:
And a chase to desperation
Then ensued until poor Lo,
Faint and well-nigh dead with panting,
Found no further he could go;
When he chanced to meet a brown bear,
Of his race as grandsire hailed,
And besought him for protection
From the danger thus entailed.

Quickly bruin scratched his fore paw,
And besmeared with his warm blood
Both cheeks of the fallen red man;
And the lion spurned for food
Flesh that thus the bear had tainted,
And he smote the Indian's cheek
With his paw, making deep scratches,
And rushed on, new prey to seek.
Then the bright blood from the bear's paw,
And the lion's scratches dun
Were preserved by the poor Indian,
Long exposed unto the sun.

So upon the red men's faces
Is the legend handed down;
Dire contention, sure deliverance
In the streaks of red and brown.

Then all turned unto the Prophet,
Braves and women, young and old,
Urging there a repetition
Of the story often told,
Wondrous legend of creation
Of the brown race of the wild;
And with strange, syllabic sweetness
He begun it as a child.

MYTH OF THE CREATION OF RED MEN

It was Nijinduke Klosekombeh
That prepared the earth for red men:
Then he met an aged woman,
And she called him Noosus (grandson).
She was bowed, the old Nokami,
Mother of all earthly beings.

“I am old,” she said unto him,
“But when shone the sun in heaven
Warm upon the dewy mountains,
I sprang forth unto my mission:
I will keep your lodge and furnish
Food and comfort for your children.”

The next day came to Klosekombeh,
A youth, who hailed him as Nassarsis,
Meaning thus “my mother’s brother.”
He had all the bloom and beauty
And perfection of dame nature,
And he owed his fair existence
To the sun on foam of waters;
And the winds of heaven bore him
To the lands to find a sweet bride,
Whom the bloom of plants should bear him.

Yet another morrow dawning,
Brought him then a beauteous maiden.
On her brow was all the color
Of a life of true perfection;

And with downcast eyes she greeted
All who met her ; and Klosekombeh
Named her Neegoroose, men's mother.
Then Klosekombeh joined in wedlock
Sun and bloom-born youth and maiden.

"I am love," she told her husband,
"And I give to you my being ;
And if you my wish shall grant me,
All the world, e'en beasts, will love me ;
I am gentle, kind and tender,
Yet I am in power a wonder,
And a woe's in store for that one
Who would taint a life so pure.
I sprang from a fragrant flower
Of a plant the earth had nourished :
Dew of morning and of evening
Fell as seed in bud of perfume,
And the sun the dew warmed sweetly,
Bringing thus the life I give you."

Then Klosekombeh called the spirit
Of the lightning to the deadwood,
That a fire might thus be kindled,
To prepare for food the fishes,
Beasts and birds ; and old Nokami
Taught them then to eat as healthful
Nuts and fruits and roots abundant,
And to drink the crystal waters,
Whence she sprang in life's bright fountain.

Thus began the race of Red Men;
And great peace and full contentment
Were their lot for many seasons.

“I,” said Bogue, “stood one among them
In the moon-lit winter air,
As ’twas common to Arcadians
To their wigwams to repair,
When, upon far missions traveling,
We had need of food and rest;
And our good Franciscan brothers
Often spake of them the best.
As the prophet closed his legend,
All acclaiming the sweet lay,
Echoing from the hills about us,
I could hear the dogs’ wild bay,
And the whoops of braves resounding
Nearer, clearer, louder still;
Presently fur-laden sledges
Drawn by dogs came o’er the hill:
Then all cried, “The trappers, hunters,
And the dogs, with game and skins,
Are returning, thank Nokami,
Winter gladness now begins.”

Then in silence sat the Hermit
Till good-night was said again,
And he went by the dim starlight
To his lodge beyond the fen.

THE GIFT OF INDIAN CORN

A LEGEND

WHEN the gold and purple sunset
Closed a genial day in May
The pioneers the Hermit welcomed,
Heard again his rustic lay.

In the long-past days primeval
Famine dire came to the red man,
And his paradise no longer
Gave him bliss, but anguish only:
For the fish and game had failed him,
Disappeared the lakes and rivers:
And in great distress he wrestled
With the spirit of the wildwood,
Called to aid the best magicians:
But their wizard arts were futile.
Presently appeared a virgin
Most resplendent in her beauty,
Clad not save in waving torrents
Of black tresses, o'er her figure
Falling as a perfect mantle.

Then the youths, charmed by her graces,
Straight forgot the bite of hunger:
And her black eyes, bright with passion,
Soon enthralled the bravest of them,
Who in marriage gave her wampum.

Only three short days were blissful:
Then a spell of deepest sadness
Fell upon the young bride's spirit:
With indifference was clouded
Her sweet face, so late entrancing.
In the quiet depths of midnight
She would wander from the wigwam,
To return when dawn was breaking.
One drear night her mate, heartbroken,
Followed far her ghost-like footsteps,
Hoping some act to discover,
That would break the spell that bound her.

Through the dark and tangled forest,
To the river-bed then barren
He the nymph divine was tracing,
When her song most weird and doleful,
Like a loon's note in the meadow,
Pealed and echoed in the distance.
She retreated in the forest,
And the youth no more could follow,
But sat on the shore dejected.
Then again he heard the echo
Of her song, like wild winds wailing,
And he saw her form emerging
From the woods across the river.
She was in delirious rapture,
And the glades rang with her laughter.

On the beach he saw an object
Clinging to her slender ankle,
Bearing semblance to a serpent.
Like a lightning-bolt the Indian
Sprang to render her assistance:
But, e'er he from his concealment
Had emerged, his eyes in wonder
Saw beneath her feet the water
Of the river bubbling greatly,
Saw it full of jumping fishes:
Deer and moose came down to drink it.
Seeming well to know his coming,
Swam she then across to meet him.
As she waded up the shallows,
With wide open arms to greet him,
Rushed the Indian to receive her:
But before they met he noticed
A long leaf tied to her ankle,
Which, when seen across the river,
He'd mistaken for a serpent.
From her limb he saw it falling:
And the spell was changed thus quickly:
For again the river waters
And the fishes all had vanished:
Game the forests had deserted.

The young bride but for a moment
More resplendent seemed than ever:
Then she turned her back unto him,
Sat aloof upon a boulder,

Covered by her raven tresses.
Then the young brave, wild with passion,
Prostrate at her feet, implored her
To explain the changeful wonder:
At her bidding life he'd forfeit
For the weal of all the red men.
Then she turned, in sweetness saying,
"Know, my brave, I am the daughter
Of the Spirit Great and Bounteous,
And am sent to save your people
From calamity most direful.
With a stone axe kill my body,
Draw it round the open spaces
In the forest, till with leaf-mould
Shall be mingled blood and sinew:
Bury then the wasted remnant
In the pine-clad earth's warm bosom.
Nothing else can give assurance
Of salvation to your people."

Such a cruel deed the young man
Stout averred he'd never compass:
He would suffer endless torture,
Rather than to shed the life-blood
Of so beautiful a creature.
Back unto the lodge he led her:
Of the young braves called a counsel.
Sternly rose their resolution:
Her decree they'd never sanction.
Then the old men were assembled,

As the last resort in counsel:
And to them the strange appearance,
Want and plenty alternating,
And the appeal of the fair stranger,
That over her husband's shoulder
Should be shot a flint-head arrow,
Taking thus the life she'd forfeit,
As decreed by the Great Spirit,
Seemed to justify the action.

Long the will of the young warrior
Strove against the cruel venture:
Vowed he that the bow and arrow
By his strength should never carry
Polished flint, to shed the heart's blood
Of his heaven-gifted consort.
When at length they found another
Who would brave the undertaking,
Then he quickly took upon him
The unwelcome execution:
For he thereupon determined
That the arrow, aimed high upward,
Should transcend its deadly mission.

Back of him full twenty paces
Meek and calm there stood his loved one,
Waiting for the consummation.
From the throng, that stood expectant,
Then emerged the trusted chieftain,
Bringing him the bow and arrow.
Grasped he both as in convulsion:

In his might he drew the bow-string,
And the arrow shot like lightning,
Back and upward in the tree-tops.
Dead and dry a limb of hornbeam
Glanced the fatal missive downward,
And it pierced his darling's bosom,
Spilling on the ground her life blood:
So she died without a murmur:
But her slayer then in anguish
Rent the forest with his wailing,
And for many days ensuing
Tireless drew the lifeless body
In a willow wicker basket,
With wild roses deeply pillowed,
O'er the leaf-mould, that was drinking
Of the dew and rain from heaven.
Then the wasted form he buried
In the bosom of the pine lands.

In his loneliness and sorrow
At the grave he kept his watches,
With wood fires at night repelling
Every spright of evil genius,
Till at length from fasts and vigils
He became so weak and wasted,
That the fuel he replenished,
On his hands and knees slow crawling.
Then, indeed, Oh, gracious wonder!
Witnessed he the resurrection
Of the body in the green blades,

That bore corn in great profusion.
Ne'er before had seen the red men
Food like that—'twas sent from heaven.
Strong they waxed from it partaking:
And supreme was their contentment.
One blade grew without fruition,
Which, instead of bark of willow,
Smoked they in their pipes gladhearted.
The Great Spirit thus had sent them,
For repose of mind and body,
Tomoonal and tomawae.
(Corn and tobacco.)

Thus the weird narration ended;
Magic of the harp-strings lulled.
On a couch the Hermit slumbered:
Glowing hearth-fire embers dulled.



PART IV
CENTENARY



PROLOGUE

THE bard sat on the steep, and he was gray;
He looked upon the stars with eyes of clay,
The stars that rose and sank beyond the hills;
'T was there he tuned his harp to sound of
rills;
And as their cadence fell upon his ears,
Fires, kindling in his heart, burned out his
fears,
And lit his late dull eyes with vision's flame,
That urged his thought astir, and gave it name.
And then he sang of mount and mead and pine,
Of men whose lofty wills could not incline
To bow unto oppression's galling yoke,
Who in the wild Freedom's glad pathway
broke;
Of men who lords and kings disdained to be,
Who felled the virgin wood and cleared the lea,
Built in the wilderness the shrine of right,
And cleft wrong's fetters forged in feudal
might.
He smote the quivering strings and sang of
home
Made where the ancient forest used to gloam,
Foreshadowing sheltered lawns and stretching
leas,
With apple bloom and hum of busy bees,
Ancestral hearths, lamp-lights, thanksgiving
boards,

The rarest worth that jealous memory hoards
Of toys and books, of rural song and lore,
The tear-dimmed eye, the blessing at the door,
As one by one the grown and scattering brood
Essayed the world's wide fields of ill and good;
The hand-thrown shuttle and the spinning
 wheel,
The flax and wool wound on the elbow-reel;
Quaint sounds and sights were mingled in the
 lay,
As sang the pastoral bard the bygone day:
But most of all he joyed that feudal power
Had there no castle built with moat and tower.

MONTVILLE

My Montville, visions of a hundred years
Hallow my smiles and consecrate my tears;
The pride your mountains speak unto the sea,
Witness, O throng, this anniversary,
'T is not their wooded slopes, nor orchards
fair,

Nor fields that sickles wait, nor garnerers there,
Nor lakes, nor streams, nor marts, nor busy
mills,

Nor rose-embowered homes, that plenty fills;
'T is men both tall and strong in heart and
hope,

And women true and tried with them to cope
For civic weal: this do your mountains proud,
With heads erect, boast to the sea and cloud.
The man that strides afield is more than swain;
Laws, marts and ethics aggrandize his brain;
Of signs in earth and tokens in the sky
Science has taught him her utility;
And he who fells the oak has prophet gift,
And destiny divines in grain and rift.

Some tell us gold and gems are in the West,
Beneath the Southern Cross life's fruits are
best,

Perpetual sunshine adds to length of days,
And the dream islands lie in tropic bays:

But when the wanderer returns at last,
And counts his treasure lost and sorrow past,
Joy crowns the hills that wall our tempered
clime,
Brief days and star-lit nights he counts sub-
lime,
Whether the leaf is green, or winter white,
Flocks in the pastures feed, or birds take
flight;
The fields, the herds, the woods, the birds, the
lea,
The mount, the river wending to the sea,
All claim the heart weary of alien skies;
Where first he saw the light is paradise.

Beside the river there and in the dale
The soldier sleeps who heard the rattling hail
Of war's wild storms, but faltered not to go
And save his land and kin from blight and woe;
The child with golden tress, the mother young,
Who left the world, the cradle song unsung;
The youth, the old, the good, the reverend head
Are treasure-trove—we count them not as dead:
Hearts of our kind within this zone of fear,
Seeing of life the shadowy marge appear,
They took in trust the compass and the chart,
To find of being here the counterpart.

The school, the spring, where at the bubbling
brink

True aspirations rise, but never sink
To drown the thoughts of childhood's radiant
days,

As in the pool we dip the fading bays;
Twin founts are they of virtue and of light,
Before whose rising flood departs the night.
Youth, drinking there, shall gain an Atlas
strength,

And on broad shoulders bear the world at
length:

And drinking, some shall stay and others go,
But on the lips of all the draught shall show
What is the gift that makes for highest good,
The gift of God and human brotherhood.

Return bearing your shields, or on them dead,
The battle fought, the Spartan mothers said.
Such valor, sons of light, knew ancient Greece.
Stern was her age, but yours flutes sweet in
peace.

Heed ye the stern command never the less;
Ye must be tried in fires of righteousness.
Ours is the age that burns as ovens burn,
And proud and wicked hearts to ashes turn
As stubble: so the Hebrew prophet told:
The dross shall disappear, leaving the gold.

If for that heated fray one takes the field,
True pride shall hail him back bearing his
shield,

Or on it dead, since for the right he fought,
And none shall speak his life as come to naught,
But all about him shall his loss bemoan,
And they who knew him say in undertone,
How is the strong staff broken, and the rod
Of beauty! as they turn reluctant sod.

'T is better thus to go than wistful stay,
And guard the paltry hoard for life's ill day.
Heaven keeps the priceless treasure time has
lost,

Counts him who fights for right more than a
host.

Valor like that gladdens the century past;
Honor thus bright awaits the goal at last.
He who shall sing the next centennial song
Will own this truth I fain would waft along.

AT THE GOLDEN WEDDING

I'VE been walking to-day in ancestral ways,
And thinking of days that are gone,
Of a sheltering roof and orchards round,
With bloom like the blush of morn;
And the brooks and birds and bees astir
Made nature's symphonies,
And the corn and grain, in the sun and rain,
Of bread were prophecies.
'Twas my grandfather's house and indeed your
home,
O matron with silver hair,
'Twas you, Uncle John, in life's buoyant morn,
That found her a maiden there.

I've been walking softly in sooth to-day
In my tracks of fifty years,
I've traced them back to a white spired church
Of my childhood smiles and tears;
I've sat in a green pew cushioned green,
And heard what a good man said,
The strange things told—things new and old—
From an old, old book he read.
'Twas you, O matron with silver hair,
That guided the children's thought,
'Twas you, Uncle John, in Life's broadening
morn,
Superintending the lessons taught.

I've been listening to-day to hear again
The boom of the distant gun
In the seaport town that told renown
By our gallant soldiers won;
When, the Nation's flag and fate assailed
By impassioned men in gray,
My kindred with loyal legions fell:
In unknown graves their clay.
'Twas you, O matron, with silver hair,
In your tears' mute eloquence
That saw Uncle John the bright blue don
For his country's strong defence.

I linger at the ancestral home,
In the pathos of a sigh,
That True, the old folks' living hope,
On the battlefield should die.
One soldier had left his parents old,
The other, his children young,
Would not a righteous God keep both
From death, by the bullets stung?
'Twas you, O matron with silver hair,
That to parents the hard news told,
'Twas you, Uncle John, when the fight was won,
That cared for both young and old.

I linger in the home retreat,
 Though it's getting late I fear,
For the shadows creep o'er the day's last steep,
 And the twinkling stars appear.
But I love the balmy air of eve
 That follows the burning sun,
And the orbs of heaven in myriads given,
 When the glare of day is gone.
'Tis to you, O matron with silver hair,
 That we rightful homage pay,
'Tis to you, Uncle John, that we say, "Well
 done,"
 On your Golden Wedding Day.

THE SCHOOLGROUND SPRING

'MONG the moss and wild florescence
Of the tangled copse and vines,
With a placid opalescence,
Lent by gems in earth's rare mines,
In dulcet and mild pulsations,
Still as ether-waves' vibrations
Breaking on a viewless shore,
Rise thy waters as of yore.

Now as then the brink's o'erflowing
Works its way through splash and sedges,
Past the gray primordial ledges,
Thence to meadow-channel going,
To find respite in the sea—
Respite I would find in thee,
O cool spring, haunt of my childhood,
Sheltered by a plat of wildwood,
Left by woodman's axe, a boon
To the school-boy's sultry noon.

In thy mirror's crystal crowning
Do I look for the reflection
Of a boyhood face in vain,
Flushed with pleasure and with frowning,
With high hope and deep dejection,
Like the days that wax and wane.

In the strange and brooding stillness
That thy magic holds enchanted,
Pause I, as to hear in shrillness
Voices that the dell once haunted.

From the swart grove, from the meadows,
From the school-room, grounds and knoll,
Hush o'er hush my spirit shadows,
And, for voicings to the soul,
Turn I to the fount's sweet throbbing,
To the low boughs' breath-roused sobbing,
To the spell within the air,
That seems lurking everywhere:

Not in vain: for like a vision
Bursting on my dreamy gaze,
Fancy makes for me a mission,
Bringing back my boyhood days.

INSECT INDUSTRY

THE hazel copse the school-boy's noon
Would well have made a sheltering boon,
But for the hornet's ancient art,
That wondrous instinct did impart.
It made its nest, then in it curled,
First paper-maker in the world.
It ran its mill, and like to men,
Lest others learn its craft and ken,
It posted notice fair and clear,
"No visitor can enter here."
Insooth we read it, we could read;
Of warning took a proper heed,
And when it said, "My busy day,"
We took the hint, and kept away.

PART V
THE SEASONS



EARLY SPRING

WINTER's firm grasp with icy arms
Reluctant yields unto the charms
Of toying waves and sparkling rills,
With which the flooding spring-time fills
Its bosom, while the lakelet's shore
With flaky foam is silvered o'er.

Maples and elms, with prudence rare,
Have flung no banners on the air:
They stand like knights with lance in rest,
Defiant to the breezes' zest.

Bursts fitfully the rattling hail
On Phoebus' burnished shafts of gold,
Descends in moulted silver showers,
And sinks in glades of sodden mold.

SUMMER GRACE

PAST a clear pool lately going,
Saw we water lilies growing,
Stars within a liquid sky,
Dropped from the blue dome on high.

AUTUMN POMP

HAIL, September, bronzed and sturdy,
Breaking through the mists of summer,
Followed by a train of sunshine,
That shall deck thy noble standards
With autumnal wreaths of glory.
Sound recall unto the reapers:
Prouder troops ne'er stood for combat
Than the host with golden helmets,
Challenging a bloodless onset.
Call for aids the youths and maidens:
Let spring's sunlight shed in beauty
Greet with sheaves the moon of harvest,
Waxing full and waning slowly.

WINTER WAYS

WHITE winter strides across the moors,
And builds the fires and shuts the doors:
The chimney corner's cosey seat
Has hence become a glad retreat.
Heaven's signal-light is ruddy Mars,
Among the wolf-eyed, hungry stars.

SNOWFALL

WITH crystal eyes
Oped in the skies,
With wings of sparry spangles,
In ghostly plight—
A habit light,
That loosely round me dangles,

I fill the air
With visions rare,
And blanch the somber meadows:
My woolly feet
The cold earth meet
As noiselessly as shadows.

From frith and bay
And ocean's way
I climbed the sunbeams golden,
O'er mountain walls,
In castle halls,
By dewy hands was holden.

A pompous king
Bade menials bring
Me robes of downy feather,
Then called me snow,
And let me go,
To grace the winter weather.

O'er field and down
And road and town
I toy and twirl and flutter:
Fair cheeks I kiss
Of lad and miss,
But praises never utter.

The fen's meek crest,
The marsh-grass nest,
By water-fowl forsaken,
I cover o'er
With wrappings hoar,
Till spring their life shall waken.

Caressing now
The mountain's brow,
I court the spectral stillness:
From one lone bird
A note is heard
To trill the air in shrillness.

Through woods I wend,
The branches bend,
I make an arch and ceiling:
The pines' low boughs
Whisper their vows,
Mid incense heavenward stealing.

I nestle round
The grassy mound,
The sear blades stoop and shiver,
And sadly sigh
That life's fond tie
Is sundered by its Giver.

From turret gray
At break of day
The startled pigeon's cooing
And sparrow's prate
Unto his mate,
Proclaim my magic doing.

As night shades fall,
My silent call
Is made at every dwelling,
The plenty-blessed,
The want-oppressed,
Alike my steps repelling.

The cliff's dun verge
My feet would urge
To meet the bounding billows:
I go to sleep
Within the deep,
On soft and foam-white pillows.

A VISION

At eventide the miller took
Beside the fire his wonted nook,
And as the stones their rounds would keep,
He presently dropped off to sleep.
Then through his slumbering senses stole
A rapturous vision of the soul:
There seemed to drop before his eyes
A Jacob's ladder from the skies.

Outside the sleety sky had cleared:
Fair to the west the wind had veered.
White looked the moon through cloud-fleece
white,
White peered the stars that winter night,
White were the woods and fields and hill.
White lay the snow upon the mill:
White flour the floor made white within,
White stones and bolt their rumbling din,
White-cased in clear resounding pine,
Kept on, while he in rapt recline,
With white upon his frock and hat,
That, fallen, lay upon the mat,
Saw dreamy forms in white appear,
Bespeaking him an heavenly cheer.

The miller gazed full fair and long,
Till on his ears burst forth a song.
Was it from the immortals bright?
If so, they vanished from his sight,
And forms that late in life he knew
Went back into the ether blue.

ACROSS THE ZONES

I sit among the snows of winter keen,
Where sad-voiced winds bemoan the tragic scene
Of sea and land, that wage a bitter fight
Beneath the wolf-eyed, hungry stars of night,
And the ice-laden bark is madly hurled
Against the crags, caught in a drowning world.

I, who so late talked with the whispering pines,
That with their fadeless green bedeck the water
 lines,
And with the oaks voiced by the zephyrs low,
Greeting the holly and the mistletoe,
Albeit, Northland or the sunny South,
Divided heart, I own I love them both.

MOUNT ST. BERNARD

(Translation from the French)

FROM thickly shrouded skies the snow
Is rushing through the vaulted atmosphere;
The shapeless drifts incessant grow
Round St. Bernard's old summits lone and
drear.

Each pass bemoans obstruction bleak;
Shade falls, and on the wild winds of the night,
From his dim, solitary peak,
The eagle hurls a final scream of fright.

At that lone cry, presaging ill,
A traveller, chilled, pauses with bated breath,
Then sinks beneath the storm and chill
Upon the precipice, awaiting death.

Steals on apace the final hour,
No watch attending 'neath the inky skies;
Fate lurking in the clouds that lower,
For aye would close the cold lids on his eyes.

There in his dazed and wandering thought
Visions of wife and children now appear
About his couch with ices fraught,
Adding a double horror to his fear.

Oh, great surprise! Oh, chance most strange!
Faintly he hears the tinkle of a bell;
The sound augments at shorter range;
A gleam of light breaks through the darksome
spell.

Anon, indeed, another sound
Relieves the pain of listening suspense;
It is the barking of a hound,
That with a monk would brave the storm in-
tense.

Joy, echoing in the dog's clear bay,
Rouses the lost one from his sinking state;
Grim death, thus foiled, lets slip his prey,
And charity recounts a wonder great.

THE TRANSIT OF YEARS

SUNSET of gold and star-light glowing,
And a nameless rhythm flowing
In the music of the spheres,
That would lull to sleep the years:
Of one that now meets the calm
Of the western crimson chamber,
Wealth and beauty let's embalm,
Sure as gauzy wings in amber;
Cherish as the words of sages,
Crystals of the thought of ages.

How fell Time betrays his trust!
Deeper ever in the dust
Sinks the stone that genius' breath
Touched with triumph over death.
The earth-worms and elements,
Leagued, despoil the tenements
In which earth's rare sons and daughters
Once lit fires of eloquence.

Reverie, cease: the stars are glowing,
And a nameless rhythm's flowing
In the music of the spheres,
That would wake from sleep the years:
Of one that now meets the calm
Of the eastern rosy chamber,

Wealth and beauty let's embalm,
Sure as gauzy wings in amber;
Cherish as the words of sages,
Crystals of the thought of ages.

PART VI
BATTLE MEMORIES



THE EAGLE AT LAKE GEORGE

WELL hast thou chosen, daring bird,
To haunt this billowy bound to earth and sky,
These domes and peaks, a mighty herd,
That in disordered grandeur troop and vie,
Each most to trespass on the brink,
And deepest welling beauty drink.

Did this proud wilderness alone
Allure thy storm and tempest-loving heart
Here to deride the balked wind's moan,
And, pennon-shielded, breast the lightning's
 dart,
To view above the storm's affray
The cloudless splendor of the day?

Or cam'st thou in avenging mood,
To haste the judgment heaven will mete at last,
And on fell violence's bloody brood
Hurl down a terror-wakening trumpet blast,
Mindful of father Jogues' death throes,
And fated William Henry's woes?

From some dim height may be thy glance
Oft runs the mazy water way along,
At thought that yet again perchance,
In pomp, with bugle note and martial song,
Down forest ways, through lake and gorge
Shall come the bannered host of George.

FORT TICONDEROGA

OLD TI, dismantled and unguarded now,
Save by the buckthorn's bristling bayonets:
Standing upon thy crumbling battlements,
Within thy ancient barracks yet, methinks,
I catch a panoramic view of throngs,
Wearing successively insignia
Of France and Britain and America;
Upon the wooded slope in fancy hear
Wounded and dying men, whose piercing cries
Nature long since to painless stillness soothed.

THE SILENCE AT MOUNT MCGREGOR

MUTE midnight the mount is holding,
Forest, glade and fount enfolding,
Sentry-pace the stars are keeping,
Round the silent soldier, sleeping
On his country's bosom, throbbing
'Neath the low boughs stifled sobbing.
Silent forest, silent fountain,
Silent midnight, silent mountain,
Silent stars, O witness ye,
Silent death and victory!

Think we on the world's commanders,
On the Cæsars, Alexanders,
On the Corsican's campaigning,
With ambition's glory waning.
Freedom, through the ripening ages,
Names of thine fill brightest pages.
Silent forest, silent fountain,
Silent midnight, silent mountain,
Silent stars, O witness ye,
Silent Grant's great victory!

Battles fought and state-toil ended,
World-round our Ulysses wended.
Bane of lotus quick discerning,
Siren voices ever spurning,
Home the way he fain would single—
With our dust his ashes mingle.

Silent forest, silent fountain,
Silent midnight, silent mountain,
Silent stars, O witness ye,
Silent loving victory!

Lo! a blest transfiguration
Throws its halo round the nation!
Alienation, to devotion
Turning like the tide of ocean,
Seas above the pale corse shrouded
Mighty virtues all unclouded.
Silent forest, silent fountain,
Silent midnight, silent mountain,
Silent stars, O witness ye,
Silent crowning victory!

THE ENCAMPMENT

Now on our Northern hills,
At close of day,
Ranks break and tents are pitched
By Blue and Gray.

Not as when Lee and Meade
Struck, and were riven
Their dauntless hosts, that tried
Before high Heaven
The dread arbitrament:
But kind and still,
Face answering face, and hearts
Beating one will.
E'en as when on the slope
The Hessians' fires
Flared on the infant State
Born to our sires;
So too, in common cause,
All hail to-day
Standards with spangled blue
O'er heads grown gray.

TO AN OLD SOLDIER

SOLDIER who knew a strife
Of blood thine own,
That on thy country's life
Dyed red a zone:
The tribute of the years
To thee, who knew no fears.

A hundred battles fought,
And their red tide,
Bearing the unforgot
Forth from thy side,
Nerved then thy heart anew
To breast the struggle through.

What meed hast thou for scars
And warm life blood—
Receipt and price of wars
For human good?
And some who wist not said,
“Go count him with the dead.”

Methinks that Heaven decreed
That thou should'st live,
Example for a deed
That heroes give
To those whose cradles rock,
Swayed by the battle shock.

A generation gone,
Another war
Fought out while yet the dawn
Of Freedom's star
Pales sweet on Orient hills;
Her hope thy pulses thrills.

Dim grows the echoing boom
Of thunder shot;
The iron hail becomes
Forget-me-not:
Stand thou, our pride, and hear
Homage thrice speaking cheer.

MEMORIAL DAY

MID balm-fraught zephyrs of the spring,
Going to couch in summer bowers,
After the sun and rain have called
From buds the nascent leaves and flowers,
Beauty to earth, voicings to air,
And myriad life to hold their sway,
Memory undying, emblem-wreathed,
Greets now a nobly solemn day.

O Wilderness of bloom! O Day,
To loyal hearts an honored trust!
How fitly do ye meet and blend
Above the brave boys' silent dust
And ashes dull, that fell beneath
Fair Freedom's fervid altar-flames,
While they, cheering the Union grand,
Went the star way, with deathless names!

Through time's far flow and ages' trend
O'er empires to republics wide,
Columbia, her citadel
A beacon still above the tide,
Shall hail recurrence of this day,
And, bending o'er her soldier-dead,
Place flowers of a thousand hues,
A laurel wreath above each head.

PART VII
TRIBUTES



EMERITUS

WITH brow of silver and with beard of snow,
He stood among a wistful laureate throng,
His words of mellow thought in accents low
Voiced the refrain of life's pure, golden song.
The strange, sweet rhapsody that lights its
fire

In hearts accordant to the quivering strings,
When the time-wonted minstrel smites his lyre,
And unto all the listening ages sings,
Was felt and welcomed, if in joy or pain,
What then the import of his muse might be:
And first and last he sang old age a *gain*,
Pronouncing thus its fitting eulogy.

TO JOHN W. HUTCHINSON

(Eighty-second Anniversary)

THOU lofty singer of the century past,
Whose thrilling voice sent out a trumpet blast
'Gainst human slavery and the demon cup,
Asserted what God-given rights make up
The hope of woman and the multitude
Whose toils complete the sum of human good:
Columbia heard thee, when with visage pale,
She faltered not amid the iron hail
That swept the Nation's flower of youth away,
But cleared her skies for a serener day.

Thou silver tongued, now graced with silver
hair,
Full oft insooth in sweetly solemn air,
When bard, or seer, or warrior was laid low,
To sleep beneath the clover and the snow,
In tenderest strains, like symphonies of heaven,
Thy benediction song in love was given.
The lowly heard thee, when their own fair dead
Lay in the winding-sheet; e'en at the head
Enrapt thou chantedst virtues that arise,
To bloom in beauty in the boundless skies.

Thou singer of keen wit and merriment,
The happy home and all that makes content
Around the hearthstone with its cheer and
grace,
Where bud and bloom the virtues of the race,

And fibre grows within the family tree,
Strength for the State's proud ship of destiny.
Thy Country heard thy song among her hills,
Rhythmic and vibrant as the gushing rills
That leap adown her granite mountain walls,
When spring breaks through the white-wrapt
 winter thralls.

Thou singer, not of the retreating past,
Thy gifted song insooth was born to last,
Abound, pervade, redound and permeate,
A light to men where ancient darkness sate;
E'en as the word, unlike to common lore,
Goes round the world, wafted from shore to
 shore.

The bright celestials turn their listening ears,
They who have heard the music of the spheres,
Glad that the light of life may longer burn,
Late to the heavens abiding thy return.

WALTER KITTREDGE

(Author of "Tenting To-night")

My sweet-songed Walter: now, indeed, too well
I know,
Tenting thou art beneath the clover and the
snow,
And though the days' reveille beauty round
thee flings,
Thy low tent's curtain for thee never outward
swings.
For us, however, who still tent upon this shore,
The cheer thy song can give is echoed o'er and
o'er,
On all of life's great battlefields in all the world,
And will be, when the battle-flags in peace are
furled.

A GARNERED LIFE

(Death of Senator George F. Hoar)

ONCE more, O Mother State, the sheaves
Of harvest stand upon the hills,
And he who garners small and great,
Anticipates the frost that kills.

More tardily would he had plied
His sickle to the field aglow
With growth of grain so full and ripe,
No blight nor chill can harm it now.

And not the shadow of a cloud
Entrains the closing of the day
Across the fallowing of the mold,
That turns the glebe back into clay.

Though in the time of falling leaf
'Tis mete that harvest joys abound,
O Commonwealth and sister States,
Your countless tears bedew the ground:

Not tears of unexpected loss,
But of immeasurable gain,
That from the granary of God
Shall sow the world with good amain.

ELEGIAC

UNDER the promontory's crest
There is a spot of pillowed rest,
Couched in the scented bloom of May,
Kissed by the dew and wafted spray.
The ruby blushes of the morn
With beauty's glow this spot adorn:
The modest hues of parting light
Here linger late to say goodnight.
From distant shores the breaking sea
Is echoed here in elegy.
The mountains yonder, rising high,
Clad in the mystery of the sky,
Since to them such a trust is given,
Guard well this gateway unto heaven.
The star that shineth over all
From fading day to morning call,
Lest seas should slumber, mountains sleep,
Doth here long nightly vigils keep.

BIRD

'Twas my school-boy, with eyes of blue,
Lent from the sky in smiling June,
With heart in youth as strong and true
As fullest manhood ever knew,
But gentle as the zephyrs' sylvan tune.

SWITZERLAND

SWEET Freedom hails her merited defence,
The very pillars of Omnipotence,
The gorge deep cut, the eternal-snow crowned
height,

Her garrison against tyrannic might.
Disdains she every proud berg-castled lord,
Civilians fostering, not a vassal horde.
Pure white she sits above the chariot-cloud,
Teaching in dales of green virtues to bud,
Where crystal waters from the glaciers flow
As constant as their source, the ceaseless snow,
Guiding pure souls above earth's storm and fray
Unto profound repose in perfect day.

FOR THE PEACE OF THE WORLD

COME, sweet Peace, brood o'er the world,
Let the battle-flags be folded;
Best by council, not by war,
Nations' destinies are molded.
Blood of men gashed and slain,
Under the starlight, the dew and the rain,
Cries to Heaven yet again,
Yet again, but in vain.

Sons inspired by Bethlehem's song,
Stand in wisdom's right engaging,
Calm the troubled seas of state,
Speak rebuke to war's mad raging.
Blood of men gashed and slain,
Under the starlight, the dew and the rain,
Cries to Heaven yet again,
Yet again, but in vain.

Martial fame has gained its height;
Naught remains for song or story
In the awful holocaust
Of a strife ghastly and gory.
Blood of men gashed and slain,
Under the starlight, the dew and the rain,
Cries to Heaven yet again,
Yet again, but in vain.

In the world's rich diadems
What's the gem of highest worth?
It is Peace, whose radiant light
Kissed the manger child at birth.
In the palaces of kings
What shall be the loftiest song?
Peace, with her arbitrament
Righting every nation's wrong.
On the hilltops of the world
What shall make the proudest day?
Peace, with battle-flags all furled,
Wars forever done away.
Then the blood of the gashed and slain,
Under the starlight, the dew and the rain,
Shall not cry to Heaven again,
Not again, as in vain.

MY COUNTRY

LAND of the free: Nation of nations:
Justice acclaims thee; tyrants lose sway:
Land of the light: Beacon to pilgrims:
Liberty hails thee; empires decay.

Liberty's stars, Freedom and Justice,
Shed their pure rays in order and law
Constant forever: God is their author:
Patriots from Him their ægises draw.

Sons of oppression, Hesperian wanderers,
Fleeing the night, seeking the light:
At law's pure altar bow in devotion:
Enshrined there is right; enthroned there is
 might.

Sons of the Pilgrims, whose hallowed ashes
Patriot fires stern virtues attest:
Priceless your birthright: boon of the ages:
Yours is the west: yours is the best.

Father and Savior and Guardian of Freedom:
In this bright realm to despots unknown,
Purchase of heroes, ransom of life-blood,
History's cardinal virtues enthrone.

Manhood and Brotherhood, Knights of true
causes:

Mix with the gold no glittering alloy:
Freedom with law, Justice with order,
Spangle your banner with peace and with joy.



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